

# The Shingle Blocker's Joke.

By CHARLES SLOAN REID.

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THE gleam of a pink frock far down the side of the mountain had caught Tom Awtry's eye, and he released the handle of the log saw and sat down upon the log he was cutting. The sun showed little mercy to the shingle blocker, and Tom threw open his shirt front to invite the coolness of the breeze. His thoughts were pleasant, and they had been in that state for the past two weeks, ever since Tilly Martin had promised to become his wife. He now looked upon the old cabin with disgust. It was unfit for Tilly's occupancy. There must be a new one, and some good American dollars must be turned out of the shingle blocks before the thing could be accomplished. Under these circumstances time was precious, and the growth of the heap of sawdust at Tom's feet had a wonderful value to his eyes. But the sight of that pink frock among the laurel leaves down there along the stream brought to him the temptation to lose at least one half hour out of the morning's work.

Tilly was fishing, and with some success, for she was intensely interested and never once turned her face toward the side of the mountain above her where the shingle blocker was at work.

Tom got up from the log and strode off toward the stream. The pink frock had remained motionless for some time, and Tom knew the fish were biting. When within a dozen steps of the bank of the stream a smile of mischief passed his lips, and he turned his swinging gait into a creeping step and moved stealthily forward until he was just behind Tilly, where she stood watching the bobbing of the line. Tom caught her by the arm, lifted her clear of the bank and dangled her form out over the water. Then there was a scream of fright that echoed down the gorge for a mile and started the pheasants from their hiding places among the undergrowth. But the scream had hardly escaped her lips when she was drawn back again and into the embrace of Tom, and the echo of his laughter followed that of the scream.

But when the moment of surprise had passed and Tilly had glanced up into Tom's face her cheeks went from the white light of fear to the danger signal of anger, and she broke from his arms and stood at bay against the trunk of a poplar. Her bosom rose and fell tumultuously, while two tears glistened in her eyes. Tom took a step



THERE WAS A SCREAM OF FRIGHT.

backward and allowed his chin to rest on his breast, crushed by the reproach of Tilly's eyes.

"Tilly, I—I am mad with me!" Tilly caught her lower lip between her teeth and remained silent, her fingers working nervously.

"For heaven's sake, Tilly, tell me ye ain't mad, so I can look up again!" But nothing came from Tilly save the sound of her still labored breathing. Tom's head remained bowed, and he waited a moment. The waters of the stream swished against the rocks, but the music of it did not at that moment appeal to the shingle blocker.

"Tilly! Oh, Tilly!" The cry came from the depths of his soul, and the tone of it seemed of cavernous origin. But there was only silence for an answer, and it cut into his heart like an edged tool. If he had taken a moment to consider how frightened she would be, this awful situation might have been avoided. But it was too late to think of that now. A weakness seized Tom's limbs, and, with head still bowed, he sank to his knees, with his hands outstretched imploringly.

"Tilly!" His voice was weaker, and the sadness of his tone was surely enough to declare the fullness of his repentance.

"Tilly, ye're too pure an' sweet, an' yer heart's too good for ye not to forgive me!" But the unshed tears still glistened in Tilly's eyes, her cheeks still glowed with the red fire of her vexation, her heart still stormed in her bosom, and she made no answer.

"An' ye won't forgive me, Tilly?" This time he had raised his eyes toward hers and waited. Under his gaze the two unshed tears slipped from the girl's eyes and hung upon her cheeks, and her white teeth released the quivering lower lip.

"I—I'll never forgive ye, Tom Awtry. So there! An' don't ye ever speak to me again!" Catching up her apron, Tilly wiped the tears from her cheeks and turned quickly into the trail that led along the edge of the stream. Tom stood motionless and stared after her until the last vestige of the pink frock was buried from view among the interminable green of the laurel's foliage. Then, with his hat in his hand, he turned back up the hill toward his work. Slowly he went. The slow machinery of his brain was trying to bring out a clear realization of all that had happened. A choking sensation was struggling for a grip of his windpipe, and he tore away his shirt collar, well down upon his shoulders. The plans for the new cabin now moved him in his thoughts, and scattered to the winds was all the promised happiness of a lifetime, and all this for a little prank of mischief.

Meanwhile Tilly had wandered from the laurel path and had climbed a bowlder whence she could look back over the bluff, and she watched Tom climbing the mountain. Her anger was passing away, and already she regretted her impulsive speech. But it was now too late to recall it.

"Poor Tom!" she murmured, shading her eyes and peering through the timber. "Oh, he's so bad an' strong! I'm just like a child in his hands. An'—an' even if he had dropped me into the water it would not have been anything but a wetting for me—an' I have gone an' played such a fool! Poor Tom!"

She sat down on the rock and covered her face with her apron. "An' I told him never to speak to me again. I wonder if he will think I meant it sure 'nough."

A deep, audible sob came now, and Tilly's small body swayed from side to side. Presently her ears caught the swish of the drag saw far up the mountain, and she knew Tom had gone back to work.

Swish, swish, swish, swish! Tilly was for an hour and listened. There was never a pause except for the few seconds required to chance the saw for a new cut. At last the dinner horn sounded from over the stream, and Tilly went home. In the afternoon she came back to the bowlder to listen to the sound of Tom's saw.

Swish, swish, swish, swish, interminably. Tom stopped no more to rest, as he had been wont to do occasionally. There was a fierceness in the stroke and a rapidity of motion that accomplished wonders. It was work, work, no matter what the muscles suffered.

Swish, swish, swish, swish! Tilly sat and listened through the whole afternoon. Oh, would he never stop one minute to rest his tired arms! At last the sun sank below the crown of the mountain, and when the shadow of night fell upon Tilly she drew a long breath of relief. But not until the last moment of the twilight was spent did the sound of the drag saw cease.

Tilly crept home again, picking her way along the trail that led through the laurel.

An hour later the moon rose, and its white light outlined many a weird shadow on the rocks. Tilly stole out of the cabin and sat upon the low veranda in front of the house. A terrible feeling of loneliness came over her. Tom had been coming almost every night to sit for an hour with her, to tell her every few minutes how much he loved her, to toy with her fingers and occasionally touch his lips to her forehead. Now he would not come. He would never come again. Maybe he would go away soon—out west, somewhere. A moan of intense heart-sickness escaped Tilly's lips, and she looked toward the moon for pity. Then presently a sound came to her ears from far away over the stream. It was faint, but clear.

Swish, swish, swish, swish! Tilly bowed her face in her hands, and the tears scalded her fingers as they fell from her eyes.

Swish, swish, swish, swish! How the faint and faraway sound cut upon her ears! After awhile a man came to the door of the cabin from the inside.

"Tilly, what air ye settin' out here so late about?" He looked down upon the girl from the doorway.

"Nothin', dad," was the answer. "Nothin'?" Well, then, I'd shore go to bed. Hello, what's that?"

Swish, swish, swish, swish! "Dinged if Tom Awtry ain't a-cuttin' shingle blocks by moonlight. Means to build that new cabin purty soon, I reckon, Tilly."

Tilly struggled to suppress the sob that rose in her throat.

"Well, Tom's not comin' here tonight, gal," said the man, "so ye'd as well go to bed."

"I'm goin' in a minute."

Tilly's minute lasted an hour, and the sound of the drag saw had not ceased when she went to bed. Late in the night, sleepless, she crept to the window, thrust her head out through the opening and listened.

Swish, swish, swish, swish! The sound smote upon her sense with sickening clearness, and she sank to her knees, dropping her head upon the window sill. A little later she went to sleep in this position and did not wake until the first peep of dawn.

The day passed, and another and another, and Tilly's misery deepened with the dawn of each succeeding one, and especially since she could see from her place on the bowlder the growing weakness of the man who loved her.

At so great a distance even she could see that he had grown pale, and once or twice she had seen him stumble over trifles and catch at the saw frame for support. Saturday came, and Tilly welcomed the day. The next day would be Sunday and Tom must rest.

But late in the afternoon of Saturday the drag saw stopped. Tom had sunk away from the handle and fallen to his knees. From the bowlder Tilly saw this and started forward. Then she stopped and retraced her steps, though for a moment she covered her eyes with her hands. When she looked again Tom was creeping and stumbling toward the cabin a hundred yards away from where he had been at work. Tilly watched him until the door was closed behind him; then she plunged into the laurel and sped along the trail toward home.

Sunday she went a number of times to the bowlder, whence she could see Tom's cabin, but not once was the door opened during the day. Monday the drag saw stood idle where the shingle blocker had left it. And now a new source of uneasiness came to Tilly. The silent, deserted look of Tom's cabin filled her with fear. It was not that she feared Tom had gone away. The unfinished work, the half

cut shingle block and the disorder of things told her that he had not gone. Tom was ill—or Tilly clutched at her temples to stay the throbbing. No, Tom could not be dead.

Tuesday Tilly crept through the laurel, passed the base of the bowlder and went on slowly, but unhesitatingly, up the side of the mountain toward the cabin where Tom lived alone.

As she neared the cabin she quickened her step. Had she waited too long? Oh, if Tom would only speak to her when she rapped at the door! She stood a full minute with her small knuckles poised to strike the rough boards. Her heart beat tumultuously, and her knees grew weak as she thought of what might have happened in that cabin.

At last the knuckles fell upon the board, and a faint, hollow tattooed sound from the interior. But no other sound came in answer. A terrible sense of horror fell upon Tilly, and a quick fever parched her lips and tongue. Then suddenly her knuckles beat a long nervous rattle upon the door, and, bowing her head against the board, she moaned:

"Oh, Tom!" A moment elapsed, then—"Tilly, Tilly!" came faintly from under the door.

With an exuberant joy Tilly reached for the latchstring, and the door swung inward. On the floor, with his head near the doorway, lay Tom. His face was sunken and sallow, and his eyes seemed far back in his head. Tilly clasped her hands and stood looking down upon him, that sickness of soul which had characterized her feelings for the last week again coming upon her.

"Tom, ye've been lyin' here since Saturday, ain't ye?" Tilly dropped by his side and took one of his hands in hers.

"An' it's all my fault, Tom. I heard yer saw goin' day an' night an' never stoppin', an' I was 'fraid it was comin' to this."

"No, Tilly; it was all my fault. I—I didn't think it would scare ye so. An' arter what I'd done an' ye would not forgive me an' told me never to speak to ye again I had to work hard to keep from thinkin' about it all. Doye forgive me now, Tilly?"

Tilly raised Tom's head on her arm and laid her cool fingers upon his brow.

"I forgive ye afore I got home, Tom, but I didn't want to go back an' tell ye. An'—an', Tom, if ye knowed how I been feelin' about it ever since I reckon ye'd forgive me."

"Forgive ye, Tilly? It's like—like takin' a peep into paradise to have ye back again. An' now when I get a leetle stronger we'll have that new cabin."

"Never mind the new cabin, Tom. The old one is good enough for the likes of me. An' now I'm goin' to help ye to bed an' get ye somethin' to eat."

"I'm a lot better now, Tilly. I just had a dizziness somehow. But I'm not on havin' the new cabin."

"Well, then, we'll have it, an' I'll bless every log ye touch."

Tilly kissed him. And just then the sun, coming from behind a cloud, threw its warm glow through the doorway and across the cabin floor.

When Katy Did. Underneath September skies, Ere the lengthening summer flies, Katydid her warning notes From the treetops ever quotes—

Warning of the coming frost, When the bloom will all be lost, "Katydid, she did, she didn't!"

Then I mind me of the night When within the moonbeams' light, Yours again, my Kate and I, Underneath September sky, Walked together side by side, Katydid as ever cried—

Warning, summer will be o'er, Time for winter's frost and hoar; Better gather while ye may, Roses from the summer day; So, before it was too late, Quick I leaned me toward my Kate, And Katy said she didn't.

But Katydid, she did, she did, —Pamie C. Whitefield in Chicago Record-Herald.

What Taft's Coming To. When William Taft is president, heigho, In nineteen nine, How styles will change! No one of us will then train down too fine, Horse jockeys will begin to stuff, and ere they go their rounds Each one will have to tip the scale at full two hundred pounds.

May Irwin will not have to bant in continuous cut, But she can waddle out and sing when Taft is president.

Thin men of every shape and size will hide themselves away, All hollow cheeks will be tabooed, all diets will be passed; All hatch faces will be mobbed. Each girl we love must be So fat she'll quiver in our arms in rotund ecstasy.

Round belted aeronauts must steer balloons they represent, All cooks must sleep in double beds when Taft is president.

The corporations will not be confined to just a few, But all the common people will have corporations too. No one will dare to worry, though in debt we'll gladly smile; We might lose flesh by worry, and we wouldn't be in style.

And though hard times are coming and we're broke, we'll still present Our joyful faces to all the world when Taft is president.

—Tom Masson in Judas.



ON THE FLOOR-LAY TOM.

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## The Scrap Book

How the Old Man Spelled It.

"Look here, Charley," said one young collegian to another who had been asked to run his eye over a letter which his friend had written to his father in which there was the inevitable request for money, "you've spelled juggle."

"I know," said Charley, "but, you see, I need the cash and don't want the old man to think I'm putting on airs. That's how he spells it."

A THAGEDY. That's him that on his coffin in the cart, An' that's his wife a-croopin' in the crowd, 'way off, an' weepin', Oh, the law is just a-breakin' of her heart!

That's him that on the scaffold, See! He looks at the hands they'll soon be foldin', An' the tears is just a-rainin' down her cheeks.

That's him that in the coffin, lyin' low, An' the woman—first to love him—An' the last to bend above him, Is his mother—but I reckon you would know.

—Frank L. Stanton.

Emancipated the Mule. When the mule cars in Jacksonville, Fla., were replaced with modern electric, an old time dandy watched the first car go by with a great deal of interest.

"Um-pah, den Yankees sho is cussin' folks," he mused. "Fus dey cum down ya er 'emancipate de nigger, den dey cum down er 'emancipate de mule!"

He Couldn't Oblige Her. An American actor, who is old enough not to consider himself a native idol by any means, was somewhat pleased in a western hotel when a pretty girl stopped him in the corridor and presented him with a rose without saying a word. He received a note the following day reminding him of the incident and asking him to send the giver of the flower two cents at the theater in which he was playing "as a memento of the occasion."

"My dear young lady," he wrote in reply, "I should be glad to send you the cents you ask for; but, on consultation with the manager of the theater, I have been informed that the seats are all fastened down and that he is opposed to having them sent away as souvenirs."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Helped the Mayor Out. An imposing cemetery was about to be opened in a western town. The mayor, who had charge of the laying out of the grounds, was puzzled for an appropriate inscription to put over the gate. Riding along in his automobile one day, he was cozzing over different holy texts, so he explained his difficulty to his chauffeur. "What would you suggest?" he asked.

"We have come to stay," was the prompt reply.

Where She Should Live. "What under the sun," asked a father of his daughter who wanted her to make a match with a young man whose only qualification was the possession of a goodly fortune—"what earthly objection can you possibly find to Mr. Spriggins?"

"The habits!" replied the daughter, "which I detest! When I marry I want a husband who does not smoke, chew, drink, swear, belong to clubs, play cards, stay out late or go motor-ing by himself!"

The father looked at his daughter for a moment or two in silence and then said:

"My child, you are but a stranger here; heaven is your home."

One of Whittier's Admirers. An admirer of Whittier's works was granted an interview and talked incessantly for an hour or more. In speaking of the poet's enduring influence on a friend the poet paused for a moment and then added, with the suggestion of a smile, "And all the time he called me 'Whittaker.'"

Jefferson Didn't Know. The home of Joseph Jefferson at Buzzards Bay was not far from the Warrenton road. Some years ago when certain ladies affected the bloomer costume when riding bicycles Jefferson came upon a lady in such a garb who had evidently mistaken her road. As Mr. Jefferson approached she asked:

"Will you kindly tell me if this is the way to Warrenton?"

"Well," said Mr. Jefferson, "I'm sure I don't know; it's the first time I've ever seen any."

No Time For Conundrums. During the war a teamster with the Cumberland army got stuck in the mud and let fly a stream of profane epithets. A chaplain passing at the time was greatly shocked.

"My friend," said he, "do you know who died for sinners?"

"Damn your conundrums! Don't you see I'm stuck in the mud?"

The Educated Flea. It was at a banquet. A rule had been agreed upon to the effect that every person called upon for a toast must respond with speech, song or story. As a last number on the improvised programme, a retiring sort of chap was called upon to do his part.

"I—I can't make a speech," he stammered, "but I heard that fleas could be trained to do tricks, and some time ago I tried to train one. Would you care to see him?"

A place was cleared off in the center of the snowy tablecloth, and in the middle the owner set the small pillbox he had taken from his vest pocket. Removing the lid of the box the trainer called out:

"Jump out, Henry!" Henry jumped out.

"Play dead, Henry!" Henry played dead to perfection.

"Lie down and roll over, Henry!" Henry did so.

"Jump backward, Henry!" Henry obeyed.

"Jump forward, Henry!" Henry jumped forward with such enthusiasm that he landed upon one of the ladies.

Quite a search was necessary before Henry could be recovered from the lady's clothing, but finally the black mite was shaken and set in his accustomed place.

Japanese Railway Work. Two Canadian companies have received orders from Japan for 5,000,000 feet of lumber for the building of 1,000 cars to be used on the railway running northward from Dainy through Manchuria.

"Jump through there, Henry!" Henry didn't move.

"Henry, I say, jump through there!" Still nothing doing.

"Henry, jump through there. I tell you!" Still the most abandoned disobedience.

The flea trainer bent low above his pet and looked at him a moment intently. Then straightening up, with a look of relief on his face he said to the woman from whom the flea had been taken:

"I beg your pardon, madam, but that's not my Henry."—Lippincott's.

Jenny's Problem. A little girl stood at her mother's knee and from the expression of her face was evidently evolving some knotty problem.

"What is it, Jenny?" asked the mother.

"Mamma," said the child seriously, "if I grow up and marry, shall I have a husband like papa?"

"Yes, dear, I hope so."

There was a long pause. Then the youngster asked:

"And if I don't marry, shall I grow up to be like Aunt Susan?"

"I hope so."

Then the little girl put her hands to her head and said in a tone of despair, "Well, I am in a fix!"

Wanted to Be Obliging. A lady visitor, wishing to be polite to the little son of her host at table, said:

"What a pretty dimple you have, Benny!"

"You think that's a pretty dimple?" said the boy. "Mamma, can I show the lady the one on my stomach?"—Ladies' Home Journal.

Delayed For Baptism. At the beginning of the civil war Colonel Brown and Colonel Smith were raising regiments in Wisconsin. One day Colonel Smith's chaplain paid a visit to Colonel Brown. On leaving he stated that the cause of religion was prospering in Colonel Smith's regiment; that no longer ago than the last Sabbath day he baptized ten of Colonel Smith's men.

"Sergeant major," exclaimed Colonel Brown, "make a detail of fifteen men to go and be baptized. I'll be blamed if I allow Colonel Smith's regiment to get ahead of mine in point of religion."

Wanted a Permanent Grievance. An Irish landlord returning home after an absence of several weeks saw one of his tenants sitting on a stone wall whistling away to his heart's content. The moment that he greeted him, however, the man scowled and began abusing him.

"Why, what's the matter, Pat?"

"Matter enough when yer steward is after evictin' me, bad luck to him!"

"Evicted you! What for?"

"The ould liar pretended me cabin wanted repairin', and as Oi would let him in, shure, he put me out."

"Never mind, Pat. I hear the cottage you have always wanted is vacant, and I'll let you have that at the same rent."

"No, thankin' your honor, I couldn't think of it."

"But why not? What is to hinder you?"

"No, your honor; O'd rather have me grievance."

How She Got In. A lady accented a little girl who was entering one of the fashionable New York flats where she knew the rules were exceedingly strict and, after some little conversation, said:

"How does it come that you live in these flats? I thought they would not take in children. How did you get in?"

"Why," replied the child, "I was born in."

Not Needed in His Business. An Irish clergyman wandering over the fields one quiet Sunday afternoon saw a young fellow well known to him by reputation, accompanied by a fierce looking bull terrier. He was evidently engaged in the reprehensible sport of "ragging." The clergyman, observing the ragged appearance of the man, thought to accomplish good in a round-about way.

"George Cullen," said he, "I am afraid times are hard with you. Now, if you would mend your ways you could mend your clothes. That dog is probably worth something. Sell him, and you could buy a good pig, which, fattened, would be far more valuable."

"An' wouldn't I look fine goin' rattin' w' a pig?"

"A Devil of a Show." A Massachusetts town recently installed a trolley system. Pedestrians among the visiting rural population still come to a standstill when the cars go by.

One countryman was watching the other day as a trolley car, with a crowd on board, whirled up the hill and dashed by. He asked a bystander where it came from.

"Down by the depot," was the reply. "Gosherrity, they mus' hev give her a